

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3186
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION BERLIN
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL MUNICH

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 3400

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CSCE, SHUM, PINT, RO
SUBJECT: ROMANIAN DISSIDENTS: STATUS REPORT
REF: BUCHAREST 3331

1. SUMMARY. WITHIN LAST WEEK GOR APPEARS TO HAVE SOMEWHAT MODERATED ITS HARD LINE TACTICS VIS-A-VIS DISSIDENTS, ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY NOT AS RESULT OF MAY 8 AMNESTY. GOMA HAS BEEN RELEASED, AS HAVE MOST OF BAPTISTS (ALTHOUGH WE HAVE ALSO HEARD OF SEVERAL NEW ARRESTS), AND WE HAVE ONE REPORT THAT HISTORIAN VLAD GEORGESCU MAY ALSO SOON BE OUT OF CUSTODY. WHILE WE ARE UNAWARE OF PRECISE CONDITIONS OF THEIR RELEASE, MOST APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN FIRMLY WARNED NOT TO ASSOCIATE WITH JOURNALISTS OR FOREIGNERS, OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES. GOR'S TACTICS HAVE SUCCEEDED IN ISOLATING AND DISRUPTING DISSIDENT ACTIVITY, HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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WE DETECT, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE INTELLECTUALS, A GOOD DEAL OF APPREHENSION AND CONCERN WITH THE USE OF SUCH METHODS. CEAUSESCU WOULD SEEM TO HAVE HAD HIS PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED IMAGE OF A DEFENDER OF "SOCIALIST LEGALITY" SERIOUSLY TARNISHED. END SUMMARY.

2. GOMA. SUBSEQUENT TO REFTTEL, AUTHOR NICOLAE BREBAN

WAS AGAIN VISITED BY ROMANIAN DISSIDENT PAUL GOMA, ACCORDING TO LONDON TIMES JOURNALIST DESA TREVISAN. GOMA IS NOW LIVING WITH HIS FAMILY IN A SMALL BUCHAREST APARTMENT (NOT THAT OF HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED), BUT HAS BEEN PROMISED A LARGER ONE TO REPLACE THAT TAKEN OVER BY AUTHORITIES FOLLOWING HIS ARREST. HOWEVER, GOMA'S WIFE IS SAID TO BE FED UP WITH ENTIRE AFFAIR AND WANTS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY, AN OPTION WHICH IS PRESUMABLY STILL OPEN. ACCORDING TO BREBAN, CHARGES AGAINST GOMA HAVE BEEN DROPPED (HE DID NOT SAY ON WHAT CONDITION), BUT NOT AS A RESULT OF MAY 8 AMNESTY. (COMMENT: THIS ACCORDS WITH WHAT TIME CORRESPONDENT DAVID AIKMAN WAS TOLD MAY 9 BY AGERPRES SPOKESMAN WHO POINTEDLY STATED THAT THOSE INVOLVED IN PASSING STATE SECRETS OR DOCUMENTS TO FOREIGNERS, I.E. DISSIDENTS, WERE NOT COVERED BY TERMS OF AMNESTY. WHEN AIKMAN PRESSED FOR DEFINITION OF SUCH A CRIME, ANSWER WAS THAT THIS INCLUDED THE DISCLOSURE OF ANY INFORMATION WHICH RELATED TO THE INTERNAL WORKINGS OR SET-UP OF ANY INSTITUTION, ECONOMIC UNIT OR OTHER TYPE OF ORGANIZATION.) GOR IS CLEARLY ATTEMPTING TO PUT LID ON PRESS STORIES ON DISSIDENTS. UPON HER ARRIVAL HERE, LONDON TIMES JOURNALIST WAS THREATENED BY AGERPRES SPOKESMAN WITH "WHAT HAPPENED TO MALCOLM BROWNE", IF SHE PURSUED GOMA STORY. HE POINTEDLY ASKED IF SHE EVEN WISHED TO RETURN TO BUCHAREST AGAIN SOME DAY.

3. BAPTISTS. EMBOFF RECEIVED SHORT PHONE CALL FROM CONFIDENTIAL

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BAPTIST DISSIDENT PAVEL NICOLESCU MAY 7 AND TIME CORRESPONDENT MET WITH HIM MAY 9. NICOLESCU CONFIRMED PREVIOUS REPORTS OF HIS CONFINEMENT, BEATING (ALTHOUGH THIS WAS NOT VISUALLY EVIDENT, ACCORDING TO TIME CORRESPONDENT) AND SUBSEQUENT HOUSE ARREST. NICOLESCU SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH NOT FORMALLY CHARGED, HE AND OTHERS ARE BEING THREATENED WITH PROSECUTION FOR TREASON AND CONSPIRACY, SHOULD THEY CONTINUE THEIR ACTIVITY. HE CLAIMED THAT SIX OTHER BAPTISTS WHO HAD ALSO SIGNED TON'S DOCUMENT CONCERNING RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION HAD BEEN ARRESTED IN LAST SEVERAL DAYS (G. SFATCU. SILVIA TERNICERU, ILIE SUCU, LUDOVIC OSHVAT, PLUS TWO OTHERS). NICOLESCU EMPHASIZED THAT BAPTISTS WOULD CONTINUE THEIR ACTIVITY AND HOPED FOR SUPPORT FROM ABROAD.

4. ALTHOUGH TON'S WIFE TOLD LONDON TIMES REPORTER THAT TON WAS UNABLE TO SPEAK WITH HER, WE UNDERSTAND THAT HE DID PREACH AT A WEDDING ON APRIL 1 IN DEFIANCE OF A BAN PLACED BY AUTHORITIES ON HIS PUBLIC APPEARANCE.

5. GEORGESCU. SEE SEPTTEL.

6. INTELLECTUALS. ROMANIAN THEATRE PRODUCER LUCIAN PINTILLE WHO HAD RECENTLY SEEN PSYCHIATRIST ION VIANU TOLD LONDON TIMES REPORTER THAN VIANU EXPECTED SOON TO RECEIVE A PASSPORT. IN ADDITION LITERARY CRITIC ION NEGOITescu WHOSE SUPPORT OF GOMA BROUGHT THREATS OF A PUBLIC TRIAL ON CHARGES OF HOMOSEXUALITY IS BEING RE-INTEGRATED INTO LITERARY WORLD AFTER HIS PARTIAL RE-CANTATION (BUCHAREST 2723). IN AN INTERESTING DEVELOPMENT, HE WAS MARRIED TO HIS FORMER LAND LADY LAST WEEK. HE IS ALSO SAID TO HAVE BEEN STRONGLY DEFENDED AGAINST CRITICISM AT THE RECENT SESSION OF THE BUCHAREST WRITERS' UNION BY POET NICHITA STANESCU. (COMMENT: THAT SESSION IS ALSO SAID TO HAVE BROUGHT FORTH A COMPLAINT THAT SOME MEMBERS (READ GOMA) HAD BEEN EXPELLED WITHOUT THE PROPER

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FORMALITIES HAVING BEEN FOLLOWED.)

7. STEFANESCU. SERBAN STEFANESCU, ONE OF GOMA'S ORIGINAL EIGHT SIGNATORIES, AND NOW SENTENCED, TOGETHER WITH SEVEN OTHERS, UNDER ROMANIA'S COMPULSORY WORK LAWS TO A YEAR'S LABOR AT LOCAL CEMENT FACTORY, WAS SEEN BY A THIRD COUNTRY DIPLOMAT LAST WEEK. SERBANESCU IS STILL HOPEFUL THAT HIS PASSPORT MIGHT BE RETURNED AND HE BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE COUNTRY WITH HIS FIANCEE. HE SAID THAT HE WAS NOT BEING HARASSED AT WORK, ALTHOUGH THE OTHERS WERE FREQUENTLY BEING PULLED IN BY SECURITATE AND ASKED TO IMPLICATE EACH OTHER AS SIGNERS OF GOMA'S MANIFESTO. ALL HAD ALSO BEEN TOLD TO AVOID CONTACT WITH FOREIGNERS AND JOURNALISTS, LEST THEY FACE MORE SERIOUS CHARGES.

8. COMMENT: THE APRIL TACTICS ADOPTED BY GOR EVINCED CEAUSESCU'S FEAR OF SPREADING DISSIDENCE AND HIS DETERMINATION TO STOP IT. HIS ACTION MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN GENERATED PARTLY BY A POST-EARTHQUAKE PSYCHOSIS THAT ANYONE WHO DISRUPTED NATIONAL UNITY IN TIME OF DISASTER DESERVED WHATEVER HE GOT. HAVING MADE HIS POINT, AND IN PROCESS SUCCESSFULLY ISOLATED AND AT LEAST TEMPORARILY HALTED DISSIDENT ACTIVITY, CEAUSESCU APPARENTLY NOW FEELS HE CAN LET UP SOMEWHAT.

9. HOWEVER, THE EXERCISE DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN WITHOUT COST. THERE WERE MANY HERE (PARTICULARLY AMONG THE INTELLECTUALS) WHO WANTED VERY MUCH TO BELIEVE, AND SO CONVINCED THEMSELVES, THAT THERE WERE NO POLITICAL PRISONERS IN ROMANIA, AND THAT THE STRICTURES

CEAUSESCU HAD PLACED ON MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND
SECURITATE (FOR WHICH HE HAS BEEN GIVEN A GREAT DEAL
OF CREDIT) WERE SUFFICIENT TO PREVENT A RETURN TO THE
FIFTIES STYLE OF POLITICAL REPRESSION. THE FACT OF
GOMA'S ARREST AND DETENTION WAS WIDELY KNOWN THROUGHOUT
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THE COUNTRY (WHILE THAT OF GEORGESCU WAS EVEN MORE
UNSETTLING IN INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES). TOGETHER WITH THE
MOVES AGAINST LESSER FIGURES, THESE ACTIONS HAVE
SIGNIFICANTLY ELIMINATED THE PREVIOUSLY EXISTING STATE
OF CONFIDENCE FELT BY MANY, AND IN THE PROCESS CEAUSESCU
HAS LOST ANOTHER OF HIS CLAIMS TO LEGITIMACY. CEAUSESCU
HAS PROVEN TIME AND AGAIN THAT HIS POSITION IS SUFFICIENTLY
SECURE TO RULE WITHOUT SUCH TRAPPINGS, BUT IT DOESN'T
MAKE IT ANY EASIER.
BARNES

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